

48. A system according to Claim 47 wherein said absorbent matrix comprises a spacer material selected from the group consisting of sand, silica, aluminosilicates, glass microspheres, clay, layered silicates, wood, natural textile materials, synthetic textile materials, alumina, aluminum oxide, aluminum silicate, zinc oxide, molecular sieves, zeolites, activated carbon, diatomaceous earth, hydrated silica, mica, microcrystalline cellulose, montmorillonite, peach pit powder, pecan shell powder, talc, tin oxide, titanium dioxide, walnut shell powder, particles of different metals or metal alloys and mixtures thereof.

49. A system according to Claim 48 wherein said spacer material is selected from the group consisting of particles made from polybutylene, polyethylene, polyisobutylene, polymethylstyrene, polypropylene, polystyrene, polyurethane, nylon, polytetrafluoroethylene and mixtures thereof.

50. A system according to Claim 47 further comprising the step of passing said lipophilic fluid and water emulsion through a particulate matter filter such that particles and particle aggregates about 1 micron or larger are removed.

51. A system according to Claim 47 wherein said absorbent matrix is in a form selected from the group consisting of a porous woven sheet impregnated with absorbent polymers, a film, a membrane and mixtures thereof.

Remarks

By the present amendment, Applicants have cancelled Claims 1-30 without prejudice and have added new Claims 31-51. Support for the new Claims is found in the Specification and in the original Claims as filed.

Also, by the present amendment, the Specification has been amended to correct a trademark usage issue. A MarkedUp Version of the changes to the Specification is attached hereto. According to DuPont's website, a generic name for Teflon® is polytetrafluoroethylene.

No new matter has been added by this amendment.

Upon entry of this amendment, Claims 31-51 are pending.

Rejections Under 35 USC 112:

Claims 4, 5, 7, 11, 18, 22 and 23 are rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections are moot in light of the cancellation of Claims 4, 5, 7, 11, 18, 22 and 23. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that new Claims 31-51 are not indefinite.

Rejections Under 35 USC 102:

Claims 1, 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 18-20, 22 and 24 are rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,733,267 to Haase ("Haase"). The Examiner asserts that Haase discloses the claimed invention and cites specific portions of Haase for support.

Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections are moot in light of the cancellation of Claims 1, 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 18-20, 22 and 24. Further, Applicants submit that new Claims 31-51 are not anticipated by Haase because Haase fails to teach each and every element of new Claims 31-51. More particularly, Haase fails to teach the steps of exposing fabric to a lipophilic fluid and water and then recovering said lipophilic fluid and said water in the form of a lipophilic fluid and water emulsion from said fabric.

Rejections Under 35 USC 103:

Claims 6, 12 and 15 are rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC 103 as allegedly defining obvious subject matter over Haase, discussed above.

Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections are now moot in light of the cancellation of Claims 6, 12 and 15. Further, Applicants submit that new Claims 31-51 are not rendered obvious over Haase for the same reasons that they are not anticipated by Haase, as described above.

Claims 3, 8, 21 and 25 are rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC 103 as allegedly defining obvious subject matter over Haase, discussed above, in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,747,960 to Freeman et al. ("Freeman"). The Examiner asserts that Haase discloses the claimed invention with the exception of the particular water absorbent material employed and the physical form of the water absorbent matrix. The Examiner attempts to combine the teachings of Freeman, which disclose a water absorbent material comprising a porous woven sheet impregnated with a cross-linked polyacrylate, with Haase to render Claims 3, 8, 21 and 25 obvious.

Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections are now moot in light of the cancellation of Claims 3, 8, 21 and 25. Further, Applicants submit that new Claims 31-51 are not rendered obvious over Haase in view of Freeman because Haase and Freeman, alone or in combination, fail to teach each and every element of the claimed invention as claimed in new Claims 31-51. More particularly, Haase and Freeman fail to teach the steps of exposing fabric to a lipophilic fluid and water and then recovering said lipophilic fluid and said water in the form of a lipophilic fluid and water emulsion from said fabric.

Claims 5 and 23 are rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC 103 as allegedly defining obvious subject matter over Haase, discussed above, in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,309,247 to Hou et al. ("Hou"). The Examiner asserts that Haase discloses the claimed invention with the exception of the recited spacer material. The Examiner attempts to combine the teachings of Hou, which disclose a filter sheet comprising clay, activated carbon, polystyrene and/or polyethylene, with Haase to render Claims 5 and 25 obvious.

Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections are now moot in light of the cancellation of Claims 5 and 23. Further, Applicants submit that new Claims 31-51 are not rendered obvious over Haase in view of Hou because Haase and Hou, alone or in combination, fail to teach each and every element of the claimed invention as claimed in new Claims 31-51. More particularly, Haase and Hou fail to teach the steps of exposing fabric to a lipophilic fluid and water and then recovering said lipophilic fluid and said water in the form of a lipophilic fluid and water emulsion from said fabric.

Claim 11 is rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC 103 as allegedly defining obvious subject matter over Haase, discussed above, in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,441,501 to Segall et al. ("Segall"). The Examiner asserts that Haase discloses the claimed invention with the exception of the recited regeneration. The Examiner attempts to combine the teachings of Segall, which disclose regenerating a water absorbent material in the recited manner, with Haase to render Claim 11 obvious.

Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection is now moot in light of the cancellation of Claim 11. Further, Applicants submit that new Claims 31-51 are not rendered obvious over Haase in view of Segall because Haase and Segall, alone or in combination, fail to teach each and every element of the claimed invention as claimed in new Claims 31-51. More particularly, Haase and Segall fail to teach the steps of

exposing fabric to a lipophilic fluid **and** water and then recovering said lipophilic fluid and said water in the form of a lipophilic fluid and water emulsion from said fabric.

Claims 16 and 17 are rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC 103 as allegedly defining obvious subject matter over Haase, discussed above, in view of U.S. Patent No. 4685,930 to Kasprzak ("Kasprzak"). The Examiner asserts that Haase discloses the claimed invention with the exception of the recited lipophilic fluid. The Examiner attempts to combine the teachings of Kasprzak, which disclose decamethylcyclopentasiloxane, with Haase to render Claims 16 and 17 obvious.

Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections are now moot in light of the cancellation of Claims 16 and 17. Further, Applicants submit that new Claims 31-51 are not rendered obvious over Haase in view of Kasprzak because Haase and Kasprzak, alone or in combination, fail to teach each and every element of the claimed invention as claimed in new Claims 31-51. More particularly, Haase and Kasprzak fail to teach the steps of exposing fabric to a lipophilic fluid **and** water and then recovering said lipophilic fluid and said water in the form of a lipophilic fluid and water emulsion from said fabric.

Conclusion

Applicants have made an earnest effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and to distinguish the claimed invention from the applied art. WHEREFORE, entry of the claim amendments, reconsideration of the rejection of the claims in light of the amendments and Remarks provided and allowance of new Claims 31-51 are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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MarkedUp Version of Specification

Other particulate materials useful herein are the synthetic polymeric particles selected from the group consisting of polybutylene, polyethylene, polyisobutylene, polymethylstyrene, polypropylene, polystyrene, polyurethane, nylon, [teflon] polytetrafluoroethylene, and mixtures thereof. Of these, the most preferred are polyethylene and polypropylene particles, with the oxidized versions of these materials being especially preferred. Examples of commercially available particles useful herein include the ACumistTM micronized polyethylene waxes available from Allied Signal (Morristown, N.J.) available as the A, B, C, and D series in a variety of average particle sizes ranging from 5 microns to 60 microns. Preferred are the ACumistTM A-25, A-30, and A-45 oxidized polyethylene particles having a means particle size of 25, 30, and 45 microns, respectively. Examples of commercially available polypropylene particles include the Propyltex series available from Micro Powders (Dartek) and ACuscrubTM 51, available from Allied Signal (Morristown, N.J.) having a mean particle size of about 125 microns.